

Remarks/Arguments:

This is a response to the office action of June 7, 2005. The issues raised in the action are discussed below.

Double Patenting

We filed a terminal disclaimer in December, 2004, in order to overcome a previous obviousness-type double patenting objection over Patent 6308165. The terminal disclaimer should be sufficient to obviate the rejections on double-patenting grounds, at pages 2 - 5 of the office action.

Prior Art Rejections

The Examiner maintains that the subject-matter of claims 11 to 13 is unpatentable over the disclosure of Kara et al. (US-6429777). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The claimed invention requires *inter alia* the features of generating a modified key for each mail item by utilizing a stored secret key and postage data which includes the postage value relating to postage charges dispensed in a determined period of time in which postal indicia are to be printed on a plurality of mail items, and utilizing this modified key to generate an authentication code.

Kara et al. makes no disclosure or suggestion of a method or apparatus which utilizes a modified key in the manner as required by the claimed invention.

Kara et al. does disclose the use of encryption, and in particular the use of public-private key pairs, but there is no disclosure or suggestion whatsoever of the generation of a modified key for each mail item and the utilization of that modified key for the

purpose of generating an authentication code, and certainly not where the modified key is based in part on postage value relating to postage charges dispensed in a determined period of time in which postal indicia are to be printed on a plurality of mail items.

The Examiner has referred to specific passages in the specification (column 4, lines 5 to 40 and column 8, lines 2 to 15), but these passages are silent as regards key modification. If the Examiner believes that Kara et al. discloses key modification as required by the claimed invention, the Examiner is requested to identify the relevant passages.

In summary, it is submitted that the subject-matter of claims 11 to 13 is patentably distinguished over the disclosure of Kara et al.

A petition for an extension of time accompanies this amendment.

Respectfully submitted,



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December 7, 2005